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Spotlight on Canadians: Results from the General Social Survey

Canadians' perceptions of neighbourhood disorder, 2014

by Adam Cotter

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^{p} preliminary
^{r} revised
x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
^{E} use with caution
F too unreliable to be published
* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

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Highlights

- According to results from the 2014 General Social Survey on Victimization, just under one-quarter (23%) of Canadians aged 15 and over perceived disorder in their neighbourhood, down slightly from 2004 (25%).
- The most commonly identified neighbourhood disorder was people using or dealing drugs, which was considered a big or moderate problem by 10% of Canadians.
- Compared to the national average, residents of Alberta and Quebec were more likely to perceive neighbourhood disorder, while those living in New Brunswick and Ontario were less likely.
- A higher proportion of those who live in the population core of a census metropolitan area perceived disorder compared to those who lived outside the core, such as in suburbs or rural areas.
- Generally, perceptions of neighbourhood disorder decrease with age, as Canadians between the ages of 25 and 34 were most likely to perceive disorder.
- Canadians who live in neighbourhoods with higher median household incomes, regardless of individual income, are less likely to perceive neighbourhood disorder.
- Residents of neighbourhoods with a relatively high proportion of low-income families and lone-parent families were more likely to perceive neighbourhood disorder, while those living in areas with higher proportions of homeowners and lower levels of resident turnover were less likely to perceive disorder.
- Across Canada's eight largest CMAs, the proportion of residents who perceived disorder was 2 to 4 times higher among those living in neighbourhoods with the highest proportion of low-income households, compared to those who lived in neighbourhoods with a relatively low proportion of low-income households.

Canadians' perceptions of neighbourhood disorder, 2014

The neighbourhood is an important component of the daily lives of many citizens, and neighbourhoods with visible signs of disorder can contribute to perceptions of vulnerability and fear of crime (Pain 2000). Indeed, data from the General Social Survey on Victimization show that Canadians who perceive one or more indicators of neighbourhood disorder are more likely to report being afraid when walking alone after dark, using or taking public transportation, or when home alone in the evenings. Canadians who perceive disorder in their neighbourhoods also report lower average life satisfaction than those who do not. Conversely, cohesive neighbourhoods can foster a sense of belonging, community, perceptions of safety, and create connections and increased social capital (Forrest & Kearns 2001; Martin 2003).

One of the better-known articulations of this relationship is the "broken windows" theory, which suggests that visible and apparent signs of disorder in a neighbourhood can influence residents to withdraw from community or neighbourhood interaction, while also signalling to others that these types of behaviours or activities are more acceptable or less likely to be detected or punished in these areas (Wilson & Kelling 1982). More recently, researchers have suggested that the relationship between disorder, fear, and crime is not as explicit or directional as originally stated. Rather, the three are related components of similar social processes; the notion that disorder leads to crime or that disorder and crime are necessarily separate phenomena which are easily distinguishable by residents has been contested (Brunton-Smith 2011; Gau & Pratt 2008). Though the concepts of disorder and crime may not be distinct, asking residents about neighbourhood disorder can provide important context to how Canadians perceive their neighbourhoods.

This report examines Canadians' perceptions of neighbourhood disorder based on results from the 2014 General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization. An overview of the perceived prevalence of neighbourhood disorder is presented by province and census metropolitan area (CMA), and differences by demographic characteristics are explored. In addition, perceptions of neighbourhood disorder and selected neighbourhood-level characteristics, based on data from the National Household Survey (NHS) and the Census, are examined at the national level and for Canada's eight largest CMAs[1].

In this article, the concept of neighbourhood is based on two different definitions. The NHS and Census definition is based on geographic location[2], while a respondent may perceive their neighbourhood to be, for example, their city, their street, their block, or any unspecified area. Thus, it is important to note that the neighbourhood, as defined by the NHS or the Census, may not correspond exactly with the respondent's perception of their neighbourhood.

Most Canadians do not perceive disorder in their neighbourhood

The majority of Canadians do not perceive disorder in their neighbourhoods.[3] Approximately 6.6 million Canadians, or just under one-quarter (23%) of those aged 15 years and over, indicated that there was a problem in their neighbourhood in 2014. Fewer than one in ten (8%) believed that there were one or more big problems (Table 1, Chart 1).

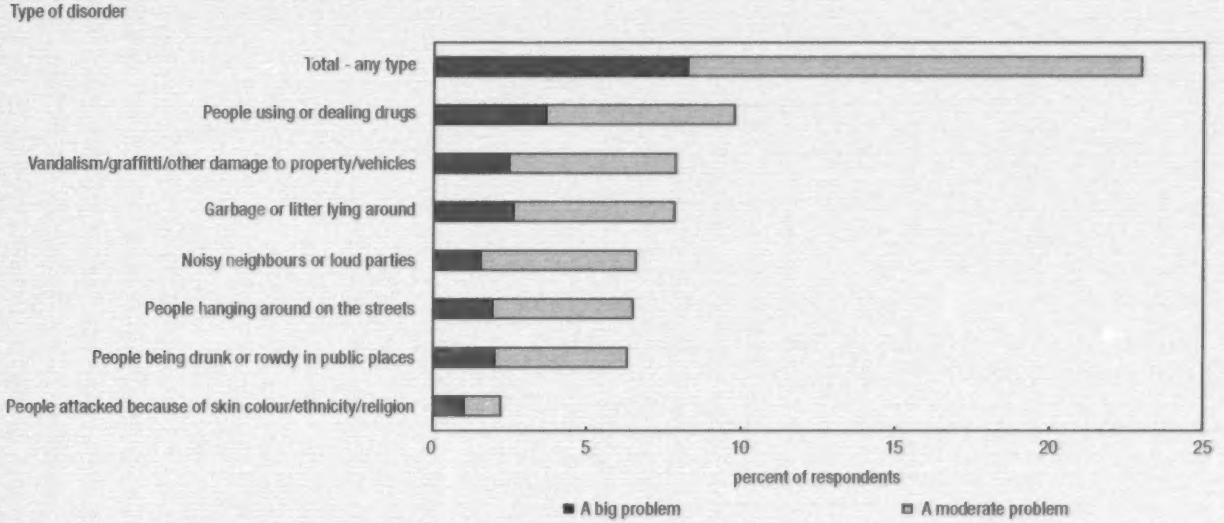
1. Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Ottawa, Quebec City, and Winnipeg.
2. Neighbourhood-level characteristics from the NHS or Census in this report are derived at either the census subdivision (CSD) or the census tract (CT) level. A CSD is the general term for municipalities (as determined by provincial/territorial legislation) or areas treated as municipal equivalents for statistical purposes (e.g., Indian reserves, Indian settlements and unorganized territories), while a CT is a small, relatively stable geographic area that usually has a population between 2,500 and 8,000 persons and is located in a census metropolitan area and/or a census agglomeration.
3. The GSS on Victimization asks Canadians if noisy neighbours or loud parties, people hanging around on the streets, garbage or litter lying around, vandalism, graffiti, or other damage to property or vehicles, people being attacked due to their skin colour, ethnicity, or religion, people using or dealing drugs, and people being drunk or rowdy in public places are big problems, moderate problems, small problems, or not problems at all.

Table 1
Perceptions of neighbourhood disorder, by specific type of disorder, 2014

Type of neighbourhood disorder	A big problem		A moderate problem		A small problem		Not a problem at all		Total
	number (000s)	percent	number (000s)	percent	number (000s)	percent	number (000s)	percent	percent
People using or dealing drugs	1,025	4	1,712	6	3,184	11	22,120	79	100
Vandalism/graffitti/other damage to property/vehicles	717	2	1,586	5	5,106	17	21,867	75	100
Garbage or litter lying around	763	3	1,535	5	4,309	15	22,774	78	100
Noisy neighbours or loud parties	451	2	1,476	5	5,008	17	22,420	76	100
People hanging around on the streets	566	2	1,334	5	3,215	11	24,170	83	100
People being drunk or rowdy in public places	568	2	1,249	4	3,548	12	23,812	82	100
People attacked because of skin colour/ethnicity/religion	292	1	348	1	1,215	4	27,063	94	100
Total - any type	**2,362**	**8**	**4,236**	**15**	**8,904**	**31**	**13,220**	**46**	**100**

Note: Responses of don't know/not stated are excluded from the calculation of percentages.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Victimization, 2014.

Chart 1
Canadians' perceptions of neighbourhood disorders, 2014



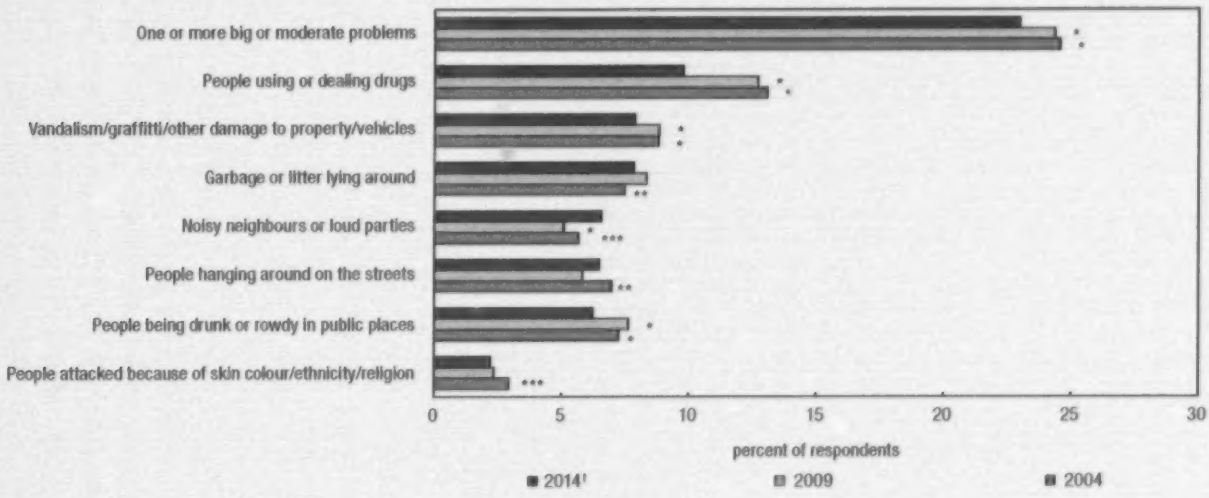
Note: Responses of don't know/not stated are excluded from the calculation of percentages.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Victimization, 2014.

Certain types of neighbourhood disorder were more commonly identified as problems by Canadians. One in ten (10%) Canadians perceived drug use or drug dealing to be a problem in their neighbourhood, while a smaller proportion believed that people being attacked because of their skin colour, ethnicity, or religion was a problem in their neighbourhood (2%).

On the whole, the proportion of Canadians perceiving neighbourhood disorder has declined slightly over the past decade (Chart 2). In 2014, 23% perceived one or more issues of neighbourhood disorder, two percentage points lower than in 2004 (25%).[4] That said, when examining specific disorders on their own, the proportion of those who believed garbage or litter lying around, people hanging around on the streets, and people being attacked due to skin colour, ethnicity, or religion were problems was unchanged, while Canadians were slightly more likely to believe noisy neighbours or loud parties were an issue, compared with 2004. For each of the other indicators, however, a smaller proportion of Canadians perceived them to be problems in 2014 compared to 2004.

4. Unless otherwise noted, all differences presented in-text are statistically significant.

Chart 2
Canadians' perceptions of neighbourhood disorder, 2004, 2009, and 2014



* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)
** significantly different from 2009 ($p < 0.05$)
*** significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$) and 2009 ($p < 0.05$)
! reference category
Note: Responses of don't know/not stated are excluded from the calculation of percentages.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Victimization, 2004, 2009, and 2014.

Perceptions of social disorder decline while physical disorder remains stable

Previous research has differentiated between physical and social indicators of disorder (Hinkle & Yang 2014; Keown 2008). Broadly, physical disorder refers to issues or problems which can be observed or perceived visually, while social disorder is related to perceptions of interactions or relationships with others who are present in a neighbourhood (Hinkle & Yang 2014). Using the questions included in the GSS, perceptions of vandalism, graffiti, and other damage to property or vehicles and garbage or litter lying around can be considered indicators of physical disorder. On the other hand, people using or dealing drugs, noisy neighbours or loud parties, people hanging around on the streets, people being drunk or rowdy in public places, and people being attacked due to their skin colour, ethnicity, or religion can be used to measure perceptions of social disorder.

In 2014, Canadians were more likely to perceive social disorder in their neighbourhood compared to physical disorder (18% versus 13%), a finding which is consistent with results from 2004 and 2009. In addition, the overall downward trend in perceptions of neighbourhood disorder has been driven by a decrease in the perception of social disorder. Since 2004, Canadians have remained equally likely to state that physical disorder is an issue in their neighbourhood, while the proportion who perceive social disorder has declined, down 3 percentage points.

Residents of Alberta, Quebec more likely to perceive neighbourhood disorder

Perceptions of neighbourhood disorder vary across the provinces. In 2014, a higher proportion of residents of Alberta (26%) and Quebec (25%) perceived disorder in their neighbourhoods compared to the national average[5] (Table 2). In contrast, perceptions of neighbourhood disorder were below average in Ontario (22%) and New Brunswick (19%).

5. Excludes the territories, where data was collected as part of a separate survey.

Table 2
Perceptions of neighbourhood disorder, by type of disorder and province, 2004, 2009, and 2014

	2004			2009			2014		
	Physical[1]	Social[2]	Total[3]	Physical[1]	Social[2]	Total[3]	Physical[1]	Social[2]	Total[3]
Province	percent								
Newfoundland and Labrador	8***	16***	17***	7***	18	20***	10*	21	25
Prince Edward Island	7**	15*	19*	8**	13*	16*	8*	15	21
Nova Scotia	14	21**	25	13	21	25	13	18	24
New Brunswick	8*	20**	22**	9*	21**	24**	8*	14*	19*
Quebec	12*	21	25	13	20	24	12	20*	25*
Ontario	12*	19***	23***	12*	18***	22*	12*	16*	22*
Manitoba	17*	20	26	21***	22**	31***	16*	18	25
Saskatchewan	13	20	25	14	19	24	13	19	24
Alberta	15*	22**	27*	15*	21	26	16*	19	26*
British Columbia	16***	25***	29***	15**	23***	28***	13	20*	25
Total - Canada's provinces[4]	**13**	**21****	**25****	**13**	**20****	**24****	**13**	**18**	**23**

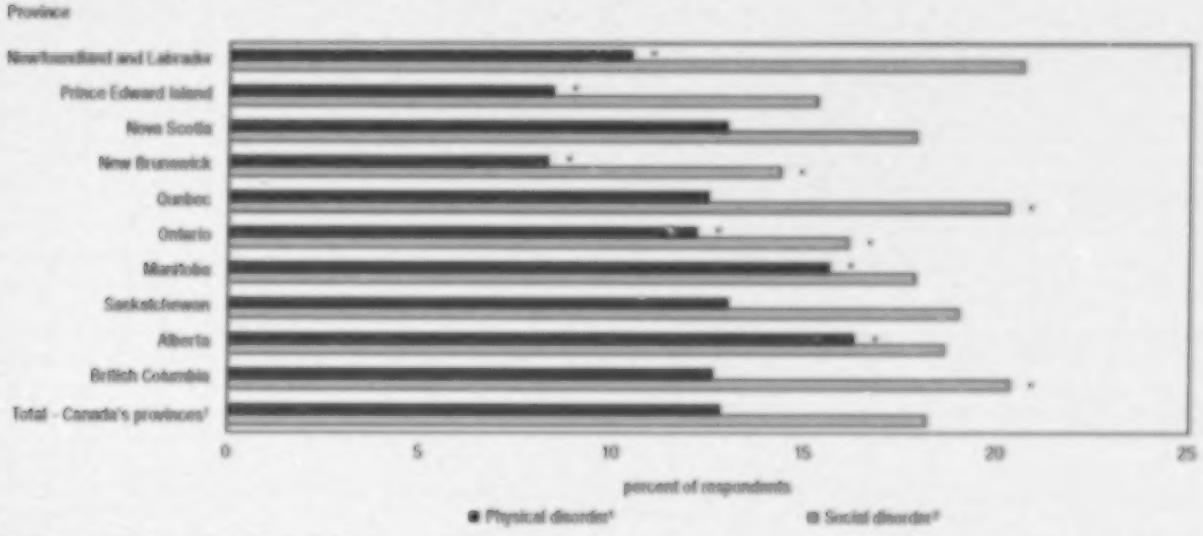
† use with caution
* significant difference from reference category only ($p < 0.05$)
** significant difference from 2014 only ($p < 0.05$)
*** significant difference from reference category ($p < 0.05$) and 2014 ($p < 0.05$)
‡ reference category
1. Includes all respondents who indicated that vandalism, graffiti, or other damage to property or vehicles or garbage or litter lying around were big or moderate problems.
2. Includes all respondents who indicated that noisy neighbours or loud parties, people hanging around on the streets, people using or dealing drugs, people being drunk or rowdy in public places, or people being attacked due to their skin colour, ethnicity, or religion were big or moderate problems.
3. Includes all respondents who indicated that at least one physical or social disorder was a big or moderate problem in their neighbourhood.
Note: Responses of don't know/not stated are excluded from the calculation of percentages.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Victimization, 2004, 2009, 2014.

Similarly, perceptions of physical and social disorder varied by province (Chart 3). Compared to the national trend, residents of Alberta (16%) and Manitoba (16%) were more likely to perceive physical disorder in their neighbourhood, while residents of Ontario (12%), Newfoundland and Labrador (10%), Prince Edward Island (8%), and New Brunswick (8%) were less likely. One in five (20%) residents of Quebec and British Columbia indicated that they perceived social disorder in their neighbourhood, while perceptions of social disorder were lower in Ontario (16%) and New Brunswick (14%).

In most provinces, the perceptions of neighbourhood disorder have remained stable since 2004 (Table 2). That said, compared to a decade ago, fewer residents of British Columbia and New Brunswick stated that there were one or more big or moderate problems in their neighbourhood, each down 4 percentage points. Newfoundland and Labrador was the only province where residents were more likely to perceive neighbourhood disorder compared with 2004, up 8 percentage points. This increase was found for both social disorder and physical disorder, up 5 and 4 percentage points, respectively.[6]

6. Percentage point change for physical disorder and social disorder do not add up to overall percentage point change in neighbourhood disorder due to multiple responses.

Chart 3
Perceptions of physical and social neighbourhood disorder, by province, 2014



* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)
[1] reference category
1. Includes all respondents who indicated that vandalism, graffiti, or other damage to property or vehicles or garbage or litter lying around were big or moderate problems.
2. Includes all respondents who indicated that noisy neighbours or loud parties, people hanging around on the streets, people using or dealing drugs, people being drunk or rowdy in public places, or people being attacked due to their skin colour, ethnicity, or religion were big or moderate problems.
Note: Responses of don't know/not stated are excluded from the calculation of percentages.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Victimization, 2004, 2009, and 2014.

Perception of neighbourhood disorder above average in Montréal, Vancouver

Compared to all Canadians living within a census metropolitan area (CMA), residents of Montréal and Vancouver were more likely to perceive one or more problems in their neighbourhood (Table 3). While, for the majority of CMAs, residents' perceptions of neighbourhood disorder was similar to the average, those living in smaller CMAs were generally less likely to perceive disorder. Of the ten CMAs where the perception of neighbourhood disorder was below average, eight had fewer than 500,000 residents: Saint John, Victoria, St. Catharines–Niagara, Windsor, Trois-Rivières, Kelowna, Kingston, and Moncton. The exceptions to this were Ottawa and Hamilton, where residents were less likely than average to perceive neighbourhood disorder despite being the sixth- and ninth-largest CMAs by population in 2014.

In addition to the variation by CMA, there is variation in the perception of disorder within CMAs. While some research has explored physical and social disorder in non-urban areas (Reisig & Cancino 2004), a considerable amount of literature explores neighbourhood disorder in the urban context (Body-Gendrot 2001; Sampson 2009; Sampson & Raudenbush 1999). In 2014, residents who lived in the population core of a CMA were generally more likely than residents of other areas within a CMA to perceive neighbourhood disorder (Chart 4). This did not hold true for residents of areas outside of CMAs, where there was no significant difference between those living in population centres and other areas.

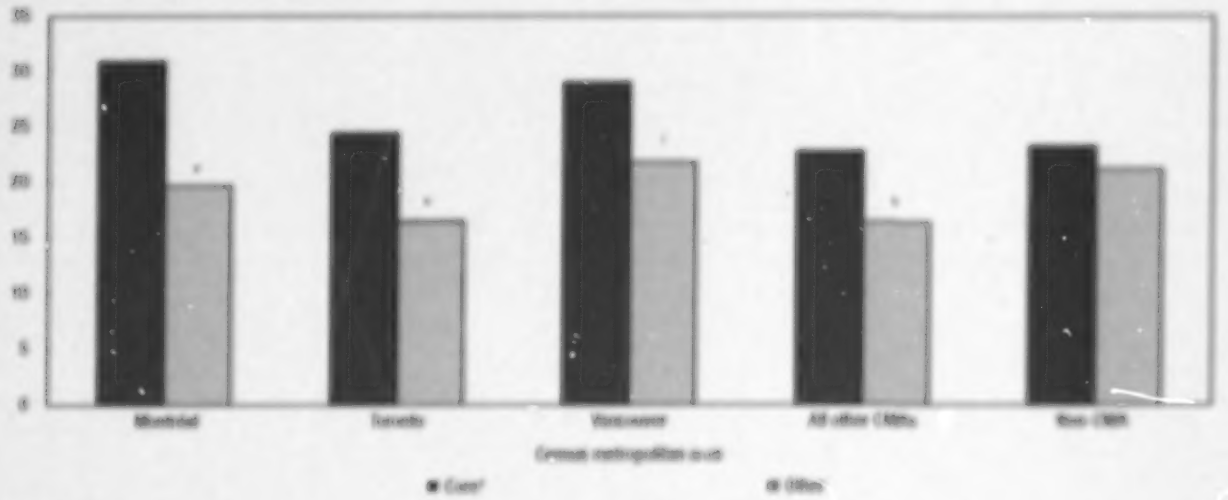
Table 3
Perceptions of neighbourhood disorder, by type of disorder and census metropolitan area, 2014

	2014		
	Physical[1]	Social[2]	Total[3]
Census metropolitan area	percent		
St. John's	11*	16	24
Halifax	14	17	24
Moncton	5**	11**	12**
Saint John	10*	13*	18*
Saguenay	7**	26	25
Québec	9*	16	21
Sherbrooke	F	13**	19*
Trois-Rivières	11*	12*	16**
Montréal	16*	24*	30*
Gatineau	12*	16	24
Ottawa	9*	14*	18*
Kingston	F	F	14**
Peterborough	9*	15*	17*
Oshawa	12*	14*	20*
Toronto	13	16	24
Hamilton	12	14*	19*
St. Catharines-Niagara	10*	14**	17*
Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo	11*	16	21
Brantford	18*	14*	22*
Guelph	F	F	20*
London	13	14*	20
Windsor	10*	9**	16**
Barrie	F	25*	29*
Greater Sudbury	24*	16*	32*
Thunder Bay	15*	22*	30*
Winnipeg	19*	18	26
Regina	16	17	24
Saskatoon	11	16	21
Calgary	16	17	25
Edmonton	16	17	24
Kelowna	5**	13*	15**
Abbotsford-Mission	16*	20*	34
Vancouver	16	23*	28*
Victoria	9**	13*	18*
Total - census metropolitan areas[4]	**14**	**19**	**26**

E use with caution
F too unreliable to be published
* significant difference from reference category (p < 0.05)
† reference category
1. Includes all respondents who indicated that vandalism, graffiti, or other damage to property or vehicles or garbage or litter lying around were big or moderate problems.
2. Includes all respondents who indicated that noisy neighbours or loud parties, people hanging around on the streets, people using or dealing drugs, people being drunk or rowdy in public places, or people being attacked due to their skin colour, ethnicity, or religion were big or moderate problems.
3. Includes all respondents who indicated that at least one physical or social disorder was a big or moderate problem in their neighbourhood.
Note: Responses of don't know/not stated are excluded from the calculation of percentages.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Victimization, 2014.

Chart 4
Perception of neighbourhood disorder, by place of residence and selected census metropolitan area, 2014

percent who perceive neighbourhood disorder



[1] core with caution
* significantly different from reference category (p < 0.05)
[1] reference category
Note: The core is the population centre with the highest population around which a CMA or a CA is delineated. The core must have a population (based on the previous census) of at least 50,000 persons in the case of a CMA. Respondents of the 10 townhall stated are excluded from the calculation of percentages.
Sources: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Victimization, 2004, 2009, and 2014.

Perceptions of neighbourhood disorder highest among 25-to-34-year-old Canadians

Beyond geographical differences, individual characteristics can also influence perceptions of neighbourhood disorder (Sampson & Raudenbush 2004). Compared to all Canadians, perceptions of physical, social, and overall disorder were highest among those aged 25 to 34, before decreasing with age (Table 4, Chart 5).

Table 6
Perceptions of neighbourhood disorder, by type of disorder and socio-demographic and economic characteristics, 2014

	Physical	Social[1]	Total[2]
Socio-demographic and economic characteristics	percent		
Sex			
Male[3]	10	17	23
Female	11	19*	25*
Age group (ref. Total)			
15 to 24 years	10	16	21
25 to 34 years	11**	20**	27**
35 to 44 years	10**	20**	25**
45 to 54 years	10	18	23
55 to 64 years	11**	18**	24**
65 to 74 years	10**	15**	22**
75 years and older	9**	9**	17**
Marital status			
Married or common-law[3]	10	17	23
Separated/divorced	12**	24**	29**
Single	10**	21**	26**
Widowed	9**	13**	19**
Level of education			
Less than high school	12	18	25
High school diploma	11	18	23
Post-secondary diploma or certificate	11	19	24
University degree[3]	10	16	23
Work activity in the last 12 months			
Working at a paid job or business[3]	10	16	21
Looking for paid work	20**	25	31
Going to school	10	17	23
Caring, Household work	10	20	27
Retired	9**	13**	17**
Other	16	24*	31*
Household income			
Lowest quartile	14	22	27
Second quartile	11	19**	24**
Third quartile	11**	18**	21**
Highest quartile	9**	13**	19**
Visible minority			
Visible minority[3]	14	19	25
Non-visible minority	10*	18	23
Aboriginal identity			
Aboriginal[3]	17	25	33
Non-Aboriginal	10**	18**	23**
Immigrant status			
Non-immigrant[3]	10	18	23
Longer-term immigrant	11*	18	21*
Recent immigrant	14	24**	29**
Immigrant, length of time in Canada unknown	13*	14*	24
Total	10	18	23

... use with caution

* significant difference from reference category (p < 0.05)

** significant difference from reference category (p < 0.01)

[3] reference category

1. Includes all respondents who indicated that vandalism, graffiti, or other damage to property or vehicles or garbage or litter lying around were a big or moderate problems.

2. Includes all respondents who indicated that noisy neighbours or loud parties, people hanging around on the streets, people using or dealing drugs, people being drunk or rowdy in public places, or people being attacked due to their skin colour, ethnicity, or religion were a big or moderate problems.

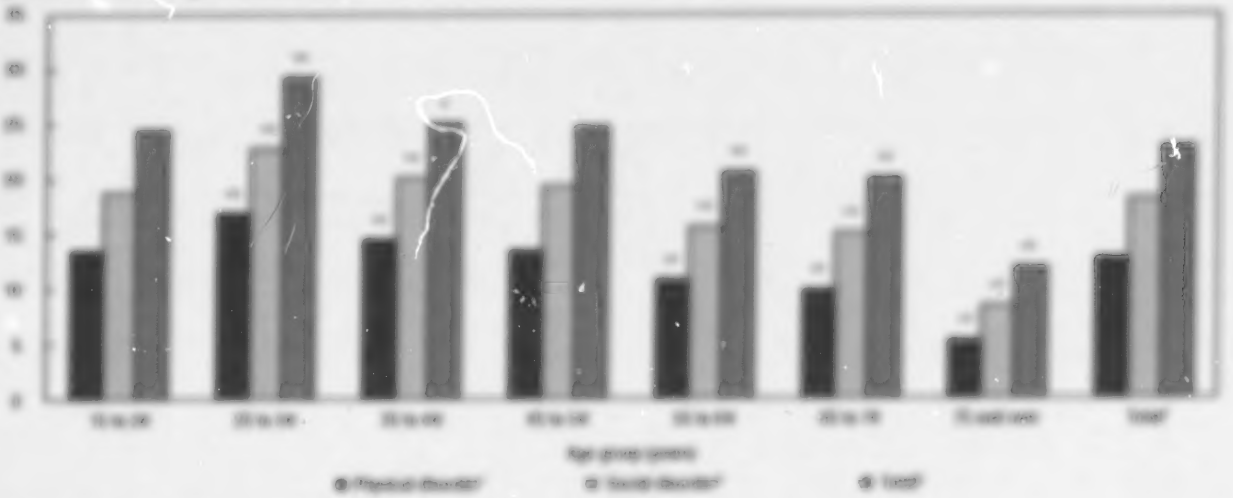
3. Includes all respondents who indicated that at least one physical or social disorder was a big or moderate problem in their neighbourhood.

Note: Responses of don't know/not stated are excluded from the calculation of percentages.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Victimization, 2014.

Chart 6
Perceptions of neighbourhood disorder, by type of disorder and age group, 2014

percent who perceive neighbourhood disorder



* significantly different from reference category (p < 0.05)
** significantly different from reference category (p < 0.01)
† reference category
1. Includes all respondents who indicated that vandalism, graffiti, or other damage to property or vehicles or garbage or litter lying around were big or moderate problems.
2. Includes all respondents who indicated that gangs, neighbours or local youths, people hanging around on the streets, people using or dealing drugs, people being drunk or rowdy in public places, or people being afraid to walk alone in their neighbourhood because of others were big or moderate problems.
3. Includes all respondents who indicated that at least one physical or social disorder was a big or moderate problem in their neighbourhood.
Note: Respondents who "don't know" or refused were excluded from the calculation of percentages.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Victimization, 2004, 2009, and 2014.

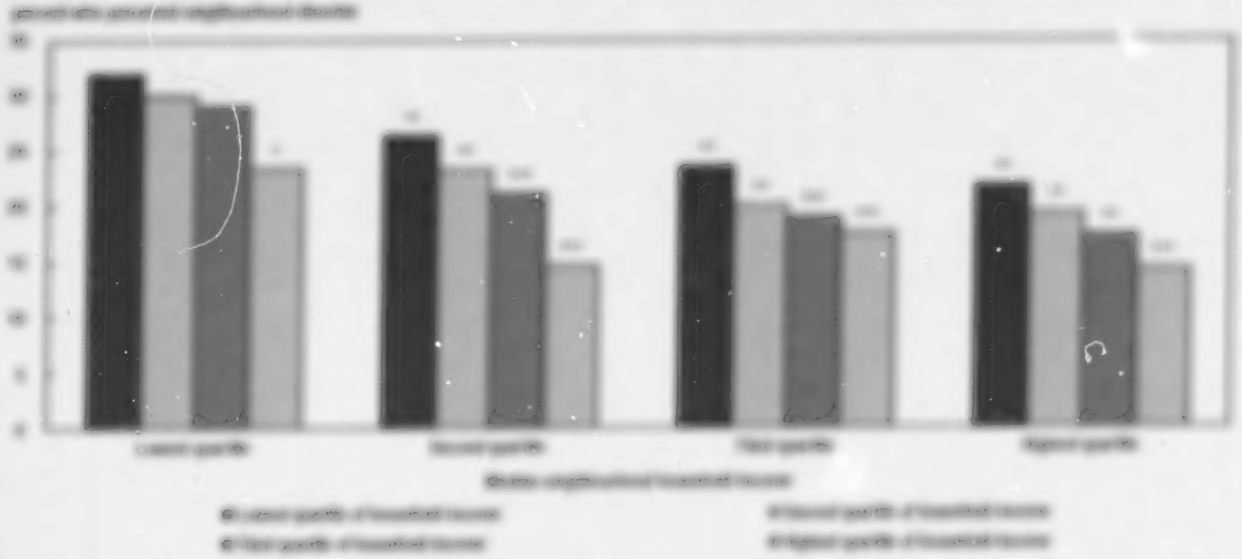
While there was no difference in their perceptions of physical disorder, women were somewhat more likely than men to perceive social disorder in their neighbourhood (15% of women compared with 11% of men) (Table 4). More specifically, men and women were similar in their perceptions of each neighbourhood disorder with the exception of people using or dealing drugs, which women were slightly more likely to perceive as a problem (10% compared to 8%).

Lower household income associated with higher perceptions of neighbourhood disorder

Canadians with the lowest household incomes are more likely to perceive neighbourhood disorder compared to those with the highest incomes. Among Canadians whose household income was in the lowest quartile, more than one in four (27%) perceived neighbourhood disorder. This proportion decreased as income rose, with 24% of those in the second quartile, 21% of those in the third quartile, and 16% of those in the highest household income quartile perceiving neighbourhood disorder (Table 4).

However, when neighbourhood income is taken into consideration, this relationship shifts. Regardless of individual income, Canadians who live in neighbourhoods with higher median household incomes are less likely to perceive neighbourhood disorder (Chart 6).

Chart 6
Perceptions of neighbourhood disorder, by household income and median neighbourhood household income, 2014



† significantly different from lowest quartile of household income (p < 0.05)
†† significantly different from lowest quartile of median neighbourhood household income (p < 0.05)
††† significantly different from both lowest quartile of household income (p < 0.05) and lowest quartile of median neighbourhood household income (p < 0.05)
Note: Responses of don't know/prefer not to answer have been excluded from the calculation of percentages.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Victimization, 2014: 2011 National Household Survey.

In other words, while a higher individual household income is associated with lower perceptions of neighbourhood disorder, this correlation can be impacted by neighbourhood factors, such as median household income. For example, an individual whose household income is in the top 20% of Canadian households but who lives in a neighbourhood where the median income is in the lowest quartile is more likely than a Canadian with a relatively low income in a higher income neighbourhood to perceive disorder. This relationship was apparent for perceptions of both physical and social disorder.

Many neighbourhood-level characteristics influence perceptions of disorder

Research on perceptions of neighbourhood disorder has underlined the importance of exploring individual perceptions in conjunction with characteristics about the neighbourhood, as perceptions are influenced by a number of factors including observable conditions, interactions, individual characteristics, and neighbourhood composition (Franzini et al. 2008). Using data from the National Household Survey (NHS) and the Census, some neighbourhood characteristics can be examined.

Certain neighbourhood characteristics are associated with varying levels of perceived disorder (Table 1, Chart 7). In particular, residents of neighbourhoods with a relatively high proportion of low-income families and lone-parent families were more likely to perceive neighbourhood disorder, while those living in areas with higher proportions of homeowners and lower levels of resident turnover were less likely to perceive disorder. This was the case for perceptions of both physical and social disorder.

Table 5

Perceptions of neighbourhood disorder, by type of disorder and selected neighbourhood characteristics, 2014

	Physical[1]	Social[2]	Total[3]
	percent		
Persons under 65 years of age as a % of total number of persons in private households			
Lowest quarter†	10	16	21
Second quarter	12*	17	23*
Third quarter	14**	18*	24**
Highest quarter	15**	21**	26**
Lone-parent-family households as a % of census family households			
Lowest quarter†	9	12	17
Second quarter	10*	15**	20**
Third quarter	13**	18**	24**
Highest quarter	20**	27**	33**
Proportion of the population in private households who immigrated within the past 10 years			
Lowest quarter†	10	16	21
Second quarter	11	16	20
Third quarter	13**	18	23**
Highest quarter	17**	23**	29**
Proportion of the population in private households who are visible minority			
Lowest quarter†	10	16	20
Second quarter	12**	17	21
Third quarter	14**	19**	25**
Highest quarter	16**	22**	28**
Proportion of the population who lived at the same address 5 years earlier			
Lowest quarter†	18	26	31
Second quarter	14**	20**	25**
Third quarter	11**	15**	21**
Highest quarter	9**	12**	17**
Proportion of owned private households			
Lowest quarter†	20	29	35
Second quarter	14**	19**	25**
Third quarter	9**	13**	18**
Highest quarter	8**	12**	16**
Proportion of low-income in 2010 based on after-tax low-income measure			
Lowest quarter†	9	11	16
Second quarter	11**	15**	20**
Third quarter	12**	19**	24**
Highest quarter	20**	28**	34**
Total	**13**	**18**	**23**

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

** significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.01$)

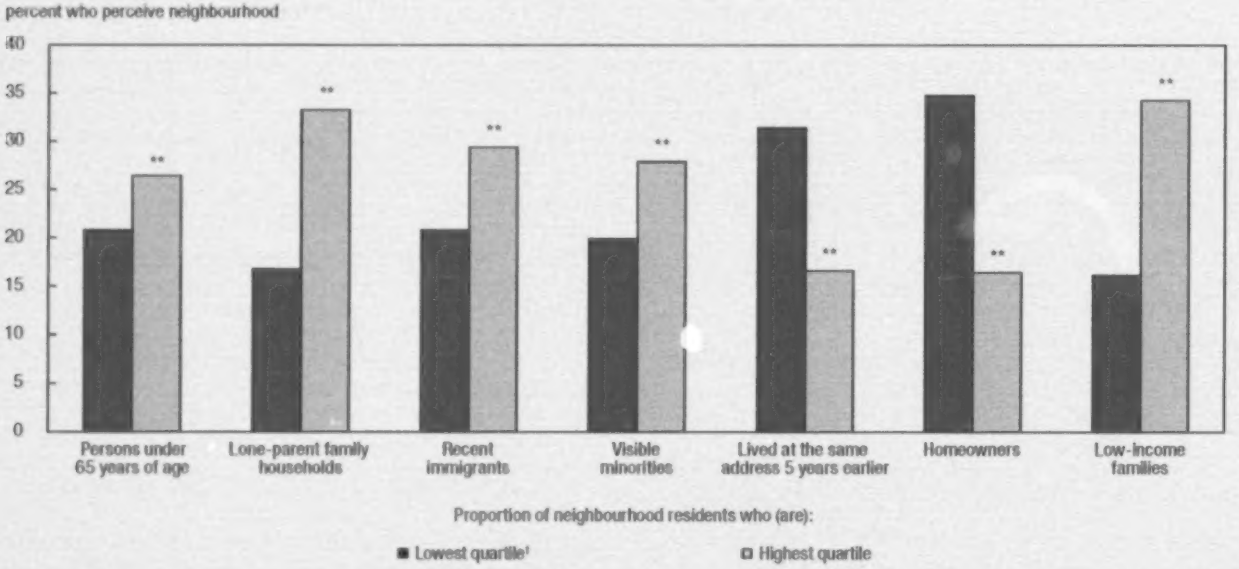
† reference category

1. Includes all respondents who indicated that vandalism, graffiti, or other damage to property or vehicles or garbage or litter lying around were big or moderate problems.
2. Includes all respondents who indicated that noisy neighbours or loud parties, people hanging around on the streets, people using or dealing drugs, people being drunk or rowdy in public places, or people being attacked due to their skin colour, ethnicity, or religion were big or moderate problems.
3. Includes all respondents who indicated that at least one physical or social disorder was a big or moderate problem in their neighbourhood.

Note: Responses of don't know/not stated are excluded from the calculation of percentages.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Victimization, 2014; 2011 Census of Population; 2011 National Household Survey.

Chart 7
Perception of neighbourhood disorder, by selected neighbourhood characteristics, 2014



** significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.01$)
† reference category
Note: Responses of don't know/not stated are excluded from the calculation of percentages.
Sources: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Victimization, 2014; 2011 Census of Population; Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey.

Neighbourhood-level characteristics in Canada's largest census metropolitan areas

While examining neighbourhood-level characteristics at the national level provides some insight into perceptions of social disorder in general, exploring these characteristics at a smaller level of geography allows for the identification of certain characteristics which may be uniquely related to residents' perceptions of disorder across Canada.

Looking at neighbourhood-level characteristics across Canada's eight largest CMAs shows similar trends, though the particular proportion of residents who perceive disorder differs. For example, across all eight CMAs, those who lived in a neighbourhood with a high proportion of low-income households or a low proportion of homeowners were more likely to perceive neighbourhood disorder (Table 6).

Table 6

Perceptions of neighbourhood disorder, by selected neighbourhood characteristics and selected census metropolitan areas, 2014

	Census metropolitan area							
	Québec	Montréal	Ottawa	Toronto	Winnipeg	Calgary	Edmonton	Vancouver
	percent							
Persons under 65 years of age as a % of total number of persons in private households								
Lowest quarter†	15E	27	16E	19	22	21	30	22
Second quarter	31**	30	23	24	18	26	28	26
Third quarter	19E	31	16E	25	32*	31*	19*	32**
Highest quarter	17E	30	17E	27**	33*	24	17**	33**
Lone-parent-family households as a % of census family households								
Lowest quarter†	12E	18	14E	19	13E	22	16E	23
Second quarter	14E	27**	16E	18	20	24	18	28
Third quarter	20E	33**	17E	26*	30**	24	26*	27
Highest quarter	36**	40**	26*	31**	43**	31	34**	36**
Proportion of the population in private households who immigrated within the past 10 years								
Lowest quarter†	19E	20	16E	20	17	26	16E	29
Second quarter	20E	24	10E	23	23	23	21	20*
Third quarter	15E	32**	24	24	30**	24	28*	33
Highest quarter	28E	43**	22E	28**	36**	28	29**	32
Proportion of the population in private households who are visible minority								
Lowest quarter†	14E	22	15E	20	19	27	20	26
Second quarter	19E	25	13E	25	26	23	24	24
Third quarter	18E	35**	23	23	26	19	28	36*
Highest quarter	32**	36**	22E	27**	36**	33	21	29
Proportion of the population who lived at the same address 5 years earlier								
Lowest quarter†	25E	46	28	27	37	26	34	39
Second quarter	20	31**	17E*	29	32	29	23*	31
Third quarter	19E	24**	13E**	22	24**	28	20**	23**
Highest quarter	18E	18**	15E*	16**	14E**	20E	17E**	21**
Proportion of owned private households								
Lowest quarter†	30	51	29	34	41	34	44	41
Second quarter	22E	28**	15E**	26**	29**	25	20**	29**
Third quarter	13E**	22**	16E*	19**	18**	23*	19**	28**
Highest quarter	17E*	17**	13E**	17**	18**	20**	10E**	17**
Proportion of low-income in 2010 based on after-tax low-income measure								
Lowest quarter†	12E	17	12E	16	15E	21	11E	21
Second quarter	16E	22*	13E	21	18	19E	15E	22
Third quarter	23E*	31**	18E	25**	28**	22	21*	32**
Highest quarter	31**	49**	30**	33**	45**	40**	45**	38**
Total	**21**	**30**	**18**	**24**	**26**	**25**	**24**	**28**

E use with caution

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

** significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.01$)

† reference category

Note: Responses of don't know/not stated are excluded from the calculation of percentages.

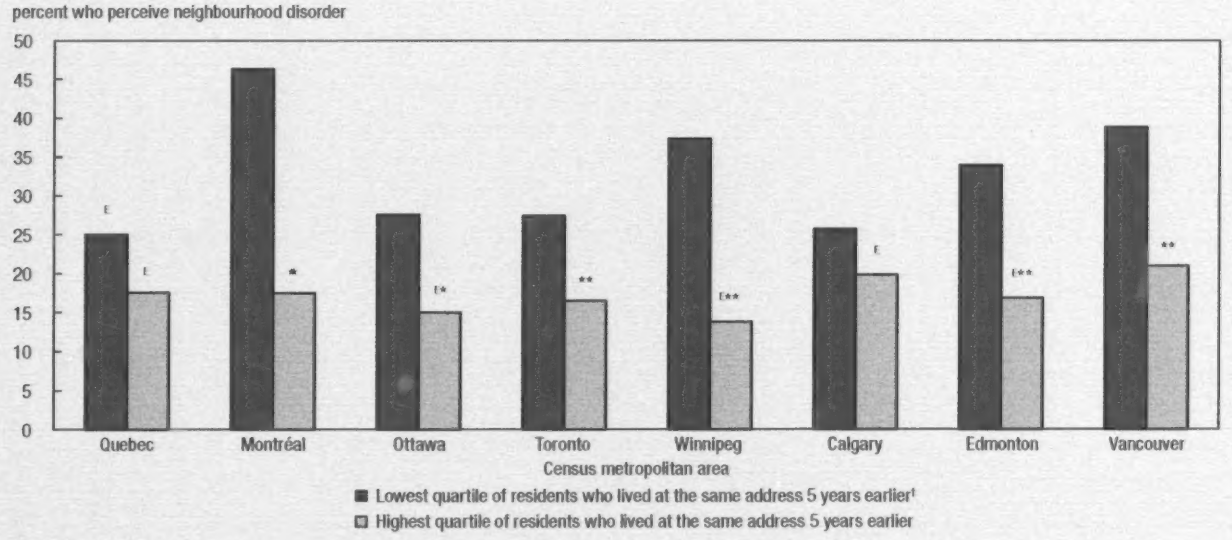
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Victimization, 2014; 2011 Census of Population; 2011 National Household Survey.

The relationship between neighbourhood characteristics and perception of disorder was not uniform across CMAs, however. Overall, residents of neighbourhoods with the highest proportion of population under 65 were more likely to perceive disorder than those living in areas with the lowest proportion of residents under the age of 65 (26% versus 21%). In Edmonton, however, residents who lived in areas with the highest proportion of persons under the age of 65 were least likely to perceive neighbourhood disorder, unlike the trend found in Toronto, Winnipeg, and Vancouver where the national trend was reflected.

Residents of neighbourhoods with less turnover perceive less disorder

Across Canada's eight largest CMAs, those who live in neighbourhoods with a comparatively low level of resident turnover are less likely to state that there are big or moderate issues in their neighbourhood (Chart 8). While in Quebec and Calgary there was no significant difference, in each of the other CMAs, those who lived in an area where relatively few residents had moved in the past five years were considerably less likely to perceive neighbourhood disorder.

Chart 8
Perception of neighbourhood disorder, by proportion of residents who lived at the same address 5 years earlier and selected census metropolitan area, 2014



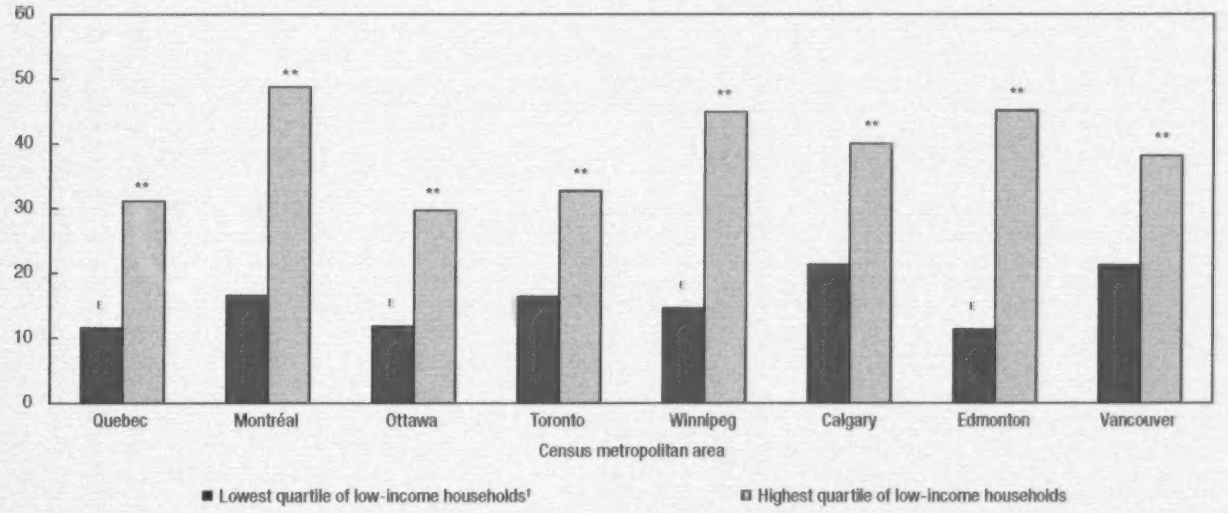
E use with caution
* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)
** significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.01$)
† reference category
Note: Responses of don't know/not stated are excluded from the calculation of percentages.
Sources: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Victimization, 2014; 2011 National Household Survey.

This difference was most apparent among residents of Montréal. In neighbourhoods where the proportion of residents who had moved was higher, 46% of residents perceived disorder, 29 percentage points higher than the proportion of residents in lower-turnover areas (18%). In Winnipeg, residents of higher-turnover areas were more than twice as likely to perceive disorder compared to those who lived in lower-turnover areas (37% compared with 14%[E]).

Higher proportion of low-income households associated with increase in perception of disorder

Across the eight CMAs examined, the proportion of residents who perceived disorder was 2 to 4 times higher among those living in neighbourhoods with the highest proportion of low-income households compared to those who lived in neighbourhoods with relatively fewer low-income households (Chart 9). In Montréal (49%), Edmonton (45%), and Winnipeg (45%), nearly half of those living in neighbourhoods with higher proportions of low-income households perceived one or more types of neighbourhood disorder.

Chart 9
Perception of neighbourhood disorder, by proportion of low-income households and selected census metropolitan area, 2014



! use with caution
* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)
** significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.01$)
† reference category
Note: Low-income households are determined based on 2010 after-tax low-income measure. Responses of don't know/not stated are excluded from the calculation of percentages.
Sources: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Victimization, 2014; 2011 National Household Survey.

Factors associated with perceptions of neighbourhood disorder

Several neighbourhood characteristics are associated with the likelihood of perceiving neighbourhood disorder. However, many of these characteristics are interrelated. As a result, a regression model was developed in order to examine characteristics which remain significant when other measures of interest are held constant[7] (Table 7). The model combines both neighbourhood and individual characteristics in order to determine which characteristics remain significantly associated with perceptions of neighbourhood disorder.

The model shows that, when all factors of interest are held constant, lower likelihoods of perceiving neighbourhood disorder are associated with being male, being over the age of 55, being in the highest household income quartile among Canadians, and being a non-Aboriginal person (Table 7). Furthermore, several neighbourhood-level characteristics remain significant when other factors were held constant. In particular, living in a neighbourhood with a higher proportion of persons under the age of 65 and a higher proportion of low-income households increased the probability of perceiving neighbourhood disorder more than any other factor when other neighbourhood characteristics were held constant, while living in an area with a high proportion of homeowners decreased the likelihood of perceiving disorder.

7. The model included all respondents.

Table 7
Factors associated with perception of neighbourhood disorder, logistic regressions, 2014

Factor	predicted probability[1]
Persons under 65 years of age as a % of total number of persons in private households	
Lowest quarter[1]	0.20
Highest quarter	0.29 **
Lone-parent-family households as a % of census family households	
Lowest quarter[1]	0.21
Highest quarter	0.25 **
Semi-detached and row houses as a % of total occupied dwellings	
Lowest quarter[1]	0.26
Highest quarter	0.22 **
Proportion of the population in private households who are visible minority	
Lowest quarter[1]	0.20
Highest quarter	0.26 **
Proportion of the population who lived at the same address 5 years earlier	
Lowest quarter[1]	0.26
Highest quarter	0.20 **
Proportion of owned private households	
Lowest quarter[1]	0.27
Highest quarter	0.20 **
Proportion of low-income in 2010 based on after-tax low-income measure	
Lowest quarter[1]	0.19
Highest quarter	0.27 **
Sex	
Male[1]	0.22
Female	0.24 **
Age group	
15 to 24 years[1]	0.25
25 to 34 years	0.27
35 to 44 years	0.25
45 to 54 years	0.25
55 to 64 years	0.20 **
65 to 74 years	0.20 **
75 years and older	0.11 **
Household income	
Lowest quartile[1]	0.28
Second quartile	0.24 **
Third quartile	0.21 **
Highest quartile	0.17 **
Don't know/Not stated[2]	0.25 **
Visible minority	
Visible minority[1]	0.20
Non-visible minority	0.24 **
Aboriginal identity	
Aboriginal[1]	0.29
Non-Aboriginal	0.23 **
Total	**0.23**

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

** significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.01$)

[1] reference category

1. Included the following variables which were not significant and are not displayed: marital status, main activity in the past 12 months, level of education, immigrant status, residence in a CMA or non-CMA, apartments as a proportion of total occupied private dwellings, single-detached houses as a proportion of total occupied private dwellings, proportion of occupied private dwellings built in the past 10 years, proportion of the population in private households who immigrated in the past 10 years, and median household income.

2. Included in the model due to the high proportion of unknown responses.

Note: The second and third quartiles of each neighbourhood-level variable were included in the model but are not displayed on the table.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Victimization, 2014; 2011 Census of Population; 2011 National Household Survey.

Summary

The majority of Canadians do not perceive big or moderate problems in their neighbourhoods, as just under one-quarter (23%) perceived some kind of neighbourhood disorder in 2014. One in ten (10%) Canadians believed that people using or dealing drugs was a problem in their neighbourhood, the most commonly perceived neighbourhood disorder. Those who lived in a population core within a CMA were more likely to perceive disorder compared with those who lived within a CMA but outside the core.

Canadians who live in neighbourhoods with higher median household incomes are less likely to perceive neighbourhood disorder. Residents of neighbourhoods with a relatively high proportion of low-income families and lone-parent families were more likely to perceive neighbourhood disorder, while those living in areas with higher proportions of homeowners and lower levels of resident turnover were less likely to perceive disorder.

Data sources

This report is based on data from the 2014 General Social Survey on Victimization. The target population consisted of persons aged 15 and older living in Canada's 10 provinces, excluding people living full-time in institutions. The number of respondents was 33,127 in 2014.

Trend analysis was done using the 2004 and 2009 General Social Surveys on Victimization. For more information on the data sources, please consult the following documents:

www.statcan.gc.ca/gsssafety

In this report, missing responses have been excluded from the denominator.

As part of the General Social Survey (GSS) program, a series of derived variables related to small area characteristics was developed from the 2011 Census and National Household Survey (NHS) profiles. These small area characteristics were added to the GSS analytical file and for the most part, are presented as proportions associated with the small areas where the survey respondents live.

For the purposes of the GSS, census tracts (CT) and census subdivisions (CSD) are used to designate the geographic level associated with "small area characteristics. For areas not broken down into CTs, the small area characteristics proposed in the master file are based on the CSD, a generic term that designates municipalities (as defined by provincial/territorial statutes) or territories deemed to be municipal equivalents for statistical purposes.

Since the estimates from the GSS are based on a sample of persons and small area characteristics relate to a geographic entity, the analysis must take this difference into account. More specifically, when the interpretation involves small area characteristics, the unit of analysis must be the respondent. As a result, variables from the NHS and the Census are typically transformed from continuous to categorical (i.e., analyzed in quartiles).

More information on the NHS and the Census is available: www.statcan.gc.ca/census

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